1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thessaly

Another village in Thessaly tackled this crucial problem of strip holdings in its own way. This village, Nees Karyes, south of Larissa on the main road to Lamia, was another place the director of agriculture wished to visit. On our way there we picked up the agriculturist who, like a county agent, had been the chief adviser to the peasants while they were planning their successful scheme. He recounted the development of the program as we drove to the village. The people of Nees Karyes, like those of Thomai, were also refugees, but they had come to Greece much earlier, in 1907, from Eastern Roumelia, now a part of Bulgaria. Otherwise, they were ordinary villagers, some with more land, some with less. It was the peasants with less who devised a plan.

After World War II, they realized that they could no longer make ends meet with what they had. In May 1952 twenty-three of the men with the smallest holdings in the village came together to talk about what would happen if they pooled their farms and other resources. The land of these 23 families totaled about 575 acres, showing an average per family below that for the other 200 families in the village, but well above the figure for Thessaly. They talked and talked, swapped ideas and contacted the agricultural-extension agent in Larissa. In October 1952 they held their first assembly. They decided to buy a tractor and to follow the advice of the agricultural specialist as to improved methods, type of seed, kind of equipment needed. They decided to combine the 575 acres for production purposes into one farm. The various types of soil are now used to best advantage. Fortunately, the first year had been a good crop year and successes far outstripped expectations. The cooperative into which they organized themselves bought a combine for 60,000 drachmas ($4,000 at the rate of exchange in 1952). But since they would have had to pay out five sixths of that to others as charges for harvesting their grain, they are in reality only 10,000 drachmas ($667) in debt, and sure of the future.

Since this idea of pooling land sounded so much like a collective farm on the Communist model, the government carefully investigated to be sure no subversive influences were at work before it granted any loans. The planners proved to be far from subversive, merely independent peasants with a common-sense approach to an old, old problem.

Our first stop in the village was at a big brick-walled granary almost completed by the cooperative. There we talked with the villager who was the cooperative's secretary. He paid great tribute to the part the government agricultural worker had played in the success of their undertaking. While we fingered the heaped golden grain on the cement floor of the impressive building, I asked, "What made you begin this cooperative in the first place?" The answer was a single eloquent word: "Necessity."

The founders of this cooperative, the twenty-three village families with

1:Sanders Z-5M (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Macedonia

241 before they left had cleaned us out and we had nothing with which to do our farming. I tried to get into a technical school, for there isn't enough work for me to do here; I also tried to get into a factory in Salonica but the same favoritism worked there."

He looked bitter and tired.

"Did you sell your tobacco for a good price?"

[426] "Yes, I did get 7,000 drachmas for my tobacco but I was already 5,500
[435] drachmas in debt. And for the crop I am now putting in I'm already heavily
in debt. What does the price of tobacco matter when sugar is going up from
[464] 16 to 20 drachmas an oka? Today there is not an oka of sugar in Alistrate for use in case of sickness. There is unemployment, not enough fields; we can't rent any more land, for soil is too expensive. How can I live? If I could, I would emigrate anywhere. I don't care where. It would be a better life."

This young peasant's dark view of his world in 1953 was due to much more than the fact that he had only one horse and had to wait restlessly while a neighbor was using it in a team. He was representative of the young village people who are uprooted because of lack of economic opportunity at home or elsewhere and who become psychologically dispossessed. No matter how willing they are to work, or how hard they do work, they have neither enough bread nor enough security.

Not far down the road we stopped to talk to an elderly couple who, with
[249] one of their three unmarried daughters, were chopping out the weeds from
[273] around the anise plants (anise is used for flavoring ouzo, a popular and
[412] potent alcoholic drink in Greece). They were using short-handled hoes, a fact that led to a discussion of their farming methods which more nearly resembled those of their ancient forebears than those of the twentieth century. The description of a Greek village in an UNRRA publication just after World War II might well have been describing them, although the old couple got most of their income from tobacco rather than grain:

[407]
[412] Plows are the major implements used. Crops are cultivated by hand with hoes and harvested with the sickle or corn knife. Grain is threshed by driving livestock over it and the chaff is separated by tossing in the wind. The method of seeding is to plow the land, scatter the seed and plow again. Sometimes the seed is dropped in the furrow and covered by the succeeding furrow. The rate of seeding is very high and at least one-third more seed than necessary is sown.

[462] Primitive methods of cultivation result in many long days being spent in the fields by the women and children — an average of 250 days per year. Often the women carry their babies and small children to the fields and watch over them while working.[2]

Although this old couple complained about not having enough food, showing us that they had only bread and water in their bag, nevertheless

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

they had a resilience that kept them going. When asked how their tobacco crop was doing, they broke into broad smiles, and the man said:

"This year our tobacco is just like basil." (By this they meant that it was nice, thick, and round.)

The woman was quick to add, "ho Theos na dosi" (may God grant it).

In a book of interpretations there is a temptation to linger with a couple like this, to record in detail their simple ways which contrast so markedly with the complicated life in the West. The temptation is even stronger when one encounters throughout Greece peasants who are as far removed from mechanization as the Acropolis is removed from the Empire State Building. The late Robert P. T. Coffin, during a year in Greece, caught their spirit in "The Golden Age," which begins:

> High in the back mountains of old Greece
> I came upon incredible peace;
> A wife with a distaff twisting wool
> A boy who filled wool breeches full,
> Riding together on a burro
> Ahead of a bronze man running a furrow
> On a steep acre mostly rocks,
> Twenty red hens, and two bronze cocks.[8]

Yet there is a spirit of change stirring in Greece that cannot be ignored no matter how strongly one may be drawn to the simplicity of the past. To drive along the road just south of Corinth and to see a new bright orange tractor plowing in the shadow of Akrokorinthos, with its lofty crown of crenelated medieval ruins on the summit, is a startling sensation; or between Levadeia and Lamia in Central Greece, to come suddenly upon a combine efficiently working its way through a wheat field with Mount Parnassus, the home of the Muses, as a backdrop, is to be jolted momentarily by the incongruities of an invasion by the machines into an ancient world which for ages had moved in the pattern of man, land, and animals.

The swiftly changing techniques are illustrated vividly on almost any day's tour through the countryside. At threshing time, for instance, I have seen peasants threshing grain by putting it into a bag and pounding it with sticks; not far away will be several threshing floors on the edge of the village with many teams of horses tramping out the grain; elsewhere there will be the slow-moving oxen pulling a little platform with metal teeth fixed underneath to separate the grain from the stalk; and around the next bend may be a big cooperatively owned threshing machine operated by a long belt turned by a tractor. Tired women, faces veiled with white scarves against the scorching heat and dust, stand feeding the broken sheaves into the thresher; other women sack the grain for the sweating men to carry away in trucks. In the memory of the traveler the impression of fierce heat and

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

243 178 exhaustion hangs over the incessant labor of these peasants through the fields of Greece at threshing time. And when the onlooker finally sees the combine doing all of the operations at once, he experiences a feeling of relief. It is as if the accumulated work and sweat of centuries begins to be removed from the people who struggle for their bread.

[241] [311] [406] [462] Mechanization has begun to do miracles in the waste lands of Greece as well. One of the agricultural achievements since the war has been the drainage of marshlands by gigantic earth-moving machinery and dredges, thus putting large acreages under rice cultivation for the first time. Here the machine is a mixed blessing, for where rice growing has come with its promise of higher income for the people, it has also meant much heavier burdens for the women to whose lot falls the new task of planting the rice and cultivating it while the men give the orders and manipulate the flow of water.

178 312 241 406 [433] The machine age has also brought pumps: not the kind powered by blindfolded donkeys or by tired human feet, but the kind that are run by gas engines or, in some places, by electricity. First, heavy drills operated by a semigovernment agency reach down for the water and, when it is found, the pumps are installed. The water is channeled into thirsty cotton fields and vegetable gardens to help raise the agricultural production of Greece up to as much as 37 percent over prewar figures.

241 422 178 Around Larissa, in Thessaly, on the trip with the director of agriculture and on other trips through that area, I had seen the great concentration of mechanized equipment which contrasted sharply with many other areas of Greece where peasants found it hard to get even iron plowshares or new hoes or sickles. In this mechanized area I talked with a man who bought a [407] [452] [464] tractor. Alekos was his name. This is what he told me: "Three years ago I bought a tractor on the installment plan. The first year I did very well, for I could do work for my neighbors after I finished my own work and they paid me a good income. Now six of my neighbors have tractors; owning one is like a craze and I do not have so much work to do for others."

[243] [554] Alekos went on to describe how the wheat of his village had been threshed by machinery since 1925, each farmer bringing his grain to the place where the thresher had been set up, but nobody locally had owned a tractor and the thresher had come in from outside. Since the war, however, tractors had become so popular that they were symbols of social prestige. We told Alekos that we had been much amused by the sight of the peasants going to market in town with their families aboard the tractors and wondered if the higher the tractor the greater the prestige. He smiled and said:

> That is partly true but in the beginning only those who had 250 acres of land could buy a tractor and they needed a medium rather than a small tractor. Now anybody can buy a tractor who can afford one and will try to get one as good as his neighbor's.

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At first I had to hire a driver for the tractor but my boy rode around with him, asked a few questions, and learned how to drive. So the second season I turned the tractor over to my son. Unfortunately, some people start driving before they know how and that is why an inexperienced person killed two men the other day not far from here.

Alekos estimated that only 30 percent of the tractor owners hired drivers and that the rest of the owners drove themselves or had members of their family who could drive. He thought that this shift away from hiring drivers would mean a trend from the bigger tractors to smaller tractors for, as he put it, "If you are going to pay for a driver you might as well get a larger tractor and get your money's worth out of the driver. If you are going to do the work yourself, a small tractor is sufficient." Not many of them who now drove, he thought, were very skillful at repairs; they were dependent on the tractor shops in town or upon the traveling automobile-borne shops which came out to the village when necessary.

In the midst of our conversation on tractors, Alekos interrupted to say, much to the amusement of the three other men who had gathered around the stone wall where we sat, that he had at first been suspicious of us: "Some of us thought you were either tax collectors or officials from the Agricultural Bank. We were ready to run away until we heard somebody cry out, 'Americans!' "

That reminded one of the bystanders of a good story he had heard from an acquaintance in the Peloponnesos who lived near Messenia. It seems that while a funeral procession was under way there, those participating saw a car with a policeman and other officials thought to be tax collectors. In perfect unison the pallbearers rested the coffin in the middle of the road and disappeared as though into thin air, leaving the officials confronting the lonely coffin.

After a laugh all around the circle, we steered Alekos back onto the subject of his tractor in order to find out why he had bought a Lantz tractor instead of an American tractor. He thought the latter much more complicated. Diesel tractors, both German and American-made, are preferred to the gas-driven type.

"Has the tractor made much difference in your life?"

Alekos furrowed his brows and thought a moment. "Yes, it has made me work much harder to pay off the debt I owe because of the tractor." He agreed that the machine had probably not lightened his wife's work very much, but a shrug of the shoulders seemed to imply, "why should it?"

Throughout the plains area of Greece I met many men like Alekos who, in one financial plunge, had leaped from the peasant farming of their fathers into the machine farming of the Western world. Unlike Alekos, some of them seemed to think that the work of the women as well as that of the men had been considerably lightened. One man from Schematari,

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
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241 461 178 462 near Thebes in Central Greece, had this to say: "The coming of a tractor will 'rest a family.' They will have better yields due to more systematic treatment and better plowing. Before, people had to work ten hours a day while with a tractor they need to work from five to six hours at a maximum. The fact that they have to work less brings joy to the house, for a person who is rested has more of a mood for gaiety than one who is tired. The women certainly are helped for they do not have to be in the fields and can occupy themselves more with housework, with clothes, and can have more time for amusement."

241 178 Elsewhere I asked, "What difference does the machine make?" The director of the Larissa agricultural school answered this way:

> Twenty years ago this area around Larissa was in large *tsiflikia*, or estates, belonging to a very few families, which produced chiefly sheep. With the expropriation and redistribution of land there was a trend toward wheat, corn, alfalfa, so much so that even the slopes where the sheep once grazed are now cultivated.
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> [407] Today Thessaly is the most mechanized area of Greece. In 1940 the plain around Larissa had 160 tractors; now the number is well over 1300. [Greece in 1952 had 5400 tractors and in 1956 over 12,000 compared with 1700 in 1938.][8]
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> [727] [492] [423] [454] The war, the occupation, and the guerrilla conflict brought an equality in that everyone lost their animals. Then, those who were able to buy tractors — chiefly those who had had the animals before the war — gained an economic advantage. Before mechanization the peasant used to toil and sweat over his land and get very little from it; now with mechanization people become more attached to the land since they see that they can make a profit from it. Those who before would have sold now hold on to it. The merchants in town complain that there is a crisis, but there is none really, for the peasant is putting all of his spare money into fields and more equipment. Now he is farming in a scientific way.
>
> At this point his wife, who had been sitting in the living room with us, began to speak. She owned some land which she had not visited for three years because of illness. When she did visit the peasants who worked this land for her, she found that they were telling her all kinds of things that she needed to do — to use fertilizer, which they had formerly thought unnecessary, and machinery, with which they had been unacquainted before. She attributed much of the recent adoption of machinery to the great movement of people during the war.
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> [476] Her husband then pointed out that today there was a greater and finer spirit of competition among the farmers than formerly, for they try to see who can get a greater yield. Mechanization leaves them more time for education and learning about new practices. It used to take a whole day for a [461] peasant to plow less than an acre with two horses but now he can do ten

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
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acres a day with a tractor. "Before the war," he went on to say, "a peasant who tried something new was considered an amusing person with a loose screw in his head. Even the agriculturists were received with 'what have those educated people got to tell us who have callouses from working?' Also, the agriculturist has learned more about agriculture and more about people, changing for the better."

The director's wife agreed with what we had learned from Alekos about the effect of mechanization upon woman's work. She did point out that machine harvesting and threshing had relieved the housewife of an old burden of feeding many people for long periods of time when the work was done by hand. However, the women still plant tobacco and cultivate cotton. Men are helping out a little more, but this hard field work in Thessaly is still a woman's job. Here again there is some compensation for the women. Although they have as much work now as before, they have more money. They will change into better dresses in the evening and go for a walk on a weekday, something much less common before the last war. Finally, the director's wife pointed out, those families who own twenty to twenty-five acres of land have acquired ease and prosperity and are becoming a well-to-do peasantry.

Elsewhere around Larissa we inquired about the spread of mechanization. The tractor dealers in the town put Alekos' problems in a somewhat different light. We learned, for example, that a 46-horsepower tractor, with starter and pneumatic tire wheels, cost 55,000 drachmas ($3,667); the purchaser had to pay 40 percent in cash and could sign a bill for the remaining 60 percent, payable after 18 months to the Bank of Greece at the rate of 16 percent interest. Dealers and some of the local government officials considered this rate most oppressive.

A second problem was that of spare parts, most of which had to be imported. Foreign-exchange difficulties and import restrictions make this difficult; when the parts were not available, the owner of the tractor was greatly inconvenienced, to put it mildly. We got some idea of the problem of spare parts when we learned that there were 25 dealers of tractors of different makes in Larissa alone. The dealers attempted to teach the purchasers how to use the machine and, a year or so before, the government had set up traveling schools which instructed in the operation and care of the tractor and afterwards gave examinations for licenses. That year, out of 1,200 farm workers examined, only 700 were given a license.

Dealers also indicated that the buyer of a tractor usually ordered a plow and a disk-harrow, with many requesting grain drills. This equipment adds greatly to the total cost. Most of the tractors were bought by individuals or by a group of three to five peasants, with only twenty to twenty-five tractors belonging to cooperatives.

In the tractor land of Larissa everything seems fine now. As in the case

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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[167] [464] ernment is at the present confronted. For Greece *has no surplus population*, and, if the country is to prosper, the services of every able-bodied man and boy are needed for the proper development of its natural resources. Weekly emigrant steamers carry large numbers to Western lands and bring but few back . . . with the consequence that many agricultural districts are left without labourers to till the soil" (p. 133).

For more on this emigration, see Theodore Saloutos, *They Remember America: The Story of the Re-Patriated Greek-Americans* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1956); and Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Greek Immigration to the United States* (New Haven, 1911).

18. The figures used in this presentation of land use are taken from *Greece Today* (August 1954); from Bickham Sweet-Escott, *Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, 1939–1953* (London, 1954); and from data supplied by the United States Department of Agriculture. In these three sources the years differ, as do some of the categories of land use, but the details prove interesting.

19. The study on idle lands made by the American Mission for Aid to Greece appeared in mimeographed form in 1952 and was based on detailed reports turned in by the field representatives of the Civil Government Division of the Mission. The report was issued by William M. Tait, who was then deputy director for field service. Other informants point out that in Epirus, and probably elsewhere, thousands of acres are owned by Greek-Americans in the United States, and Greek villagers do not feel free to make use of such idle lands.

20. For a discussion of these exports, see E. J. Bell, "Greece, Exporter of Farm Products," *Foreign Agriculture*, March 1958, pp. 5–6.

[428] 21. The use of lots in dividing up a patrimony among brothers in a Boeotian village is described in an article by Harry L. Levy, "Property Distribution by Lot in Greece," *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, LXXXVII (1956).

Chapter V. The Peasant at Work

[127] 1. The unpublished manuscript from which this comes is "Ta Laographika tes Kleitorias" (Concerning the Folklore of Kleitoria).

2. UNRRA, *Greece, Ripe for Improvement: A Study of Marginal Land Farming in Greece* (Washington, D.C., 1946), p. 8.

3. Robert P. T. Coffin, *Hellas Revisited*, p. 14.

[874] [407] [492] 4. Dr. Charles House, former director of the American Farm School in Salonica, played a great part in preparing the way for mechanization in Northern Greece, since the students at this school were taught how to operate and repair tractors long before they began to appear in so many villages. He said that one argument for the use of the tractor in preference to the draft animal was the fact that the animals ate up too much of the farm produce.

5. For the full World War II picture, see C. S. Stephanides, "Agricultural Machinery in Greece," *Foreign Agriculture*, XII (November 1948), 250–253.

[465] [438] 6. Supplementary labor is an important element in the economy of many families and even whole villages. In the Peloponnesos people from the mountain villages can harvest olives and help with the pressing of the oil, receiving pay in kind. When they help with the vineyards they are paid in money, as they are in Macedonia when they help plant tobacco. Near Ioannina there are villages specializing in certain crafts from which many men go during the winter to ply their trades.

[127] 7. "A Tobacco Village in Xanthe Nomos," (1952, mimeographed), prepared by A. Argyropoulos. One of the village studies conducted by the Near East Foundation for the Greek Ministry of Agriculture and the United States Economic Cooperation Administration. The following comment about this village (Dafnon) by John D. Photiadis is helpful: "I have served as a county agent in that area and I think that Dafnon is not a representative village. It is considered the poorest village in the area and the most stricken by the reduction of prices of Turkish tobacco. This is because

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

jobs in the vineyards must be finished quickly so that the men of the household may turn to plowing cotton fields, those farmers who prefer to start plowing earlier, or who have larger vineyards than the household can handle alone, sometimes hire labor for the hoeing. Sons who are not needed on their father's land may work for others in the village or may go for several days to work for relatives living in neighboring villages. In either case, they are paid a daily wage of between forty and sixty drachmas (thirty drachmas equal one dollar) and get their board as well. It requires three man-days of labor to hoe one *strema* of vineyard. Hiring labor for this is considered expensive. Farmers with fewer land resources may, in order to avoid the extra expense, ask their wives to do some hoeing. Although such a procedure is frowned on in Vasilika, a farmer considers the practical necessities of his situation as more important than any possible loss of prestige. Moreover, village opinion itself recognizes the force of a man's practical needs, and tempers criticism to the nature of the specific circumstances. This phenomenon is characteristic of Vasilika and will be mentioned again.

The vines continue to need some attention from time to time until the grapes have ripened. Wine-making begins in September with the gathering of the grapes. September itself used to be called *triyitis* (the time of the grape harvest). It is an occasion much enjoyed, since men, women, and children all pick the grapes together, talk and joke as they do so, and eat a little of the produce besides. Four or five people can pick the yield of the two *stremata* in a few hours. The pack animals carry baskets of grapes back to the house. After making certain that there are no leaves among the fruit, the men of the household wash their feet and then trample the grapes. The must collects in shallow basins and is transferred to barrels. A sample of must from each barrel (the usual household's yield is two barrels) is taken to a chemist in town to check whether sugar or alcohol or both may be needed. Payment for this service is made according to the weight of the wine the farmer will treat as a result of the chemist's advice. Besides adding the recommended quantities of sugar and white alcohol to the must, the farmers also add enough resin to make up two percent of the contents of the barrels. Resin is sold by vendors who circulate among the villages in trucks during the wine-making season. The resin gives the wine of the Greek countryside its name, *retsina*, and its characteristic flavor. In classical times the ancient Greeks and later the Romans added resin to the must as a wine preservative. It still has this function, but to the present villagers, as to the ancients, the resinated wine has a pleasing taste and, in Vasilika, is much preferred to nonresinated wines. We once started to serve a bottled Greek nonresinated wine in our village home but we were quickly informed by our village guests that it was poor indeed, and one of our visitors left the table to go home to bring a carafe of his own superior wine. Those to whom drinking a mild form of turpentine seems unpalatable at first can develop, as we discovered, a taste for *retsina* and come to enjoy it very much.

Wheat fields are plowed and sown in the fall, in late October and early November. A farmer can plow his wheat fields with a horse or two pulling a

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steel plow, or he can hire a tractor to do the job. The hiring of the tractor includes fuel and the services of a tractor operator.

Two farmers in Vasilika own tractors—one made the purchase in 1952 (a British Ferguson), the other in 1956 (a British Fordson). They were bought on the installment plan with credit extended by the Agricultural Bank of Greece. The tractor operators are a son and a nephew, respectively, of each of the owners. Both of the farmers who purchased tractors have landholdings which are large for the region, perhaps as many as sixty *stremata* but divided into tracts of some ten to twenty *stremata* each. Even if the land were not divided into such small parcels, there would not be enough return on so little land for economically sound use of a tractor. Both the bank management and the farmers are well aware of this, so that credit for the purchase of the machinery is given with the understanding that the owner will use the tractor as a capital investment and earn income from it by renting it out.

Farmers decide to hire or not to hire a tractor for the fall plowing on the basis of practical considerations of the moment. If weather conditions have been normal in the late summer and early fall, a farmer will be more likely to proceed with his horse-drawn plowing. If, however, early rains have delayed the cotton picking and all hands are needed in the cotton fields when the wheat fields should be plowed, a farmer may hire a tractor to be sure that the job gets done before the winter rains. Most of the farmers maintain a horse to use as a pack animal, in any case, so that it is obviously cheaper to plow with the horse. For increased efficiency, two farmers sometimes contribute one horse apiece, so that the team of horses working on each of their fields in turn will get the work done faster and at no additional cost. For wheat, the farmers say, the deeper plowing of the tractor is not important, so whenever possible they work with the animals. For cotton, as we shall see later, they believe tractor plowing increases the yield. Generally speaking, as one might expect, the farmers with fewer land resources tend to make less use of the tractors than those who can expect a good cash income from their fields and so can afford the outlay for the hire of a tractor.

After the broadcast sowing of the wheat (which is done on each *strema* immediately after it has been plowed) and the dragging of the fields, what remains is some light hoeing to be done in February and March, the spreading by hand of some chemical fertilizer at about the same time, and when the weather warms up, the spraying of a chemical weed killer by means of a hand-operated pressure pump. A farmer who does not own such a pump borrows one from a neighbor, and no charge is made for its use.

Harvesting of the wheat crop is done almost entirely by machine in Vasilika. Reaper and thresher combines, with their operators, make the rounds of the Boeotian plains villages at harvest time in June. The threshed wheat is weighed out in the fields and the machine operators are paid promptly with twelve percent of the crop. Chaff and straw left in the fields are collected by the household and made into small packages to be used for bedding down the animals. Each farmer may set aside four or five *stremata* of his wheat field to be reaped by hand with a standard sickle. He then hires a thresher with operator

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
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243 427 at a cost of eight percent of the amount of the wheat threshed. This machine leaves the straw in suitable condition for a baler which is hired next to press the straw into bales for food for the horses, mules, and donkeys.

[231] [471] [407] The harvesting machinery is privately owned by entrepreneurs in the towns. Simple threshers have been known and used on the Boeotian plain for a generation at least. The combine has appeared only since World War II and the hay baler only since the early 1950's. What accounts for the increasing willingness of the farmers to pay for machine operations on their wheat crop? Unquestionably, the growing efficiency of cotton production and the success of cotton and tobacco as cash crops enable the farmers to concentrate their labor and attention on cotton and tobacco production and to let the growing cash value of the crops make up for the loss of a certain percentage of the wheat crop. However, chemical fertilizers and weed killers have increased the wheat yields, and since payment for machine harvesting is in kind and not in cash, the entire transaction can be managed at what to the farmers is a minimal cost.

[241] [433] [242]

243 437 A household uses its own wheat for making its bread, and bread is still literally the staff of life, the basic food for the people of the village. Wheat is also used for a kind of cereal called *trakhana* and for egg noodles. It is given as payment to the shepherds, whose wives turn the wheat income into their families' bread supply. It continues to be used as an alternative medium of exchange for fish, olive oil, olives, coffee, and other household necessities not locally produced. As we have seen, the wheat straw is useful for the care of animals, and finally, in an emergency, some wheat can always be sold for cash.

[262] [438] [231]

246 231 A typical farmer of Vasilika reserves four or five *stremata* of his land for oats, barley, and clover. These furnish food for the pack animals not only during the winter, but also in the early summer when the animals are permitted to graze in the oat and clover fields as the crops mature. A small corner of a grain field may be used for lentils and beans, which add to the household's food supply.

244 262

248 312 406 The crops which most interest the farmers of Vasilika today are cotton and tobacco. Because of the dry summers in Boeotia cotton production in the region depends on irrigation. The high water-table makes well-pump irrigation feasible. This system is also suited to the patterns of the rural social structure since it requires no centralized control or authority—each farmer household can dig its own well and work its own pump for its own fields. Any man who has not yet purchased a pump can hire the use of one owned by a farmer with adjacent fields.

[249] [621] [427]

Cotton became a significant cash crop for Vasilika around 1936 when one of the farmers who had heard about horse-driven well-pumps set one up for himself and the other farmers soon followed suit. Since World War II, British-manufactured diesel pumps bought on the installment plan with credit extended from the Agricultural Bank have replaced the horse-drawn equipment. Diesel pumps, like the tractors, may be rented by the day and the renter pays for fuel also. The market for the use of the pump goes beyond the village itself

[652] [427]

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

since farmers in neighboring villages whose cotton fields lie adjacent to those of Vasilika's pump owners often want to hire the pumps. Here again, the rent income helps to defray the cost of the machinery.

Work is begun in the cotton fields shortly after the winter rains abate in February or March. Like the wheat fields, the cotton fields are sometimes plowed with horses. But, apart from the two farmers who own tractors, a number of farmers believe that the increased yield from the deeper plowing a tractor furnishes is more than worth the cost of renting the machines. Planting is ordinarily done by hand, but in 1956, a few farmers owned machine planters, and several farmers were borrowing them to try them out for the first time. The utilitarian and essentially nontraditional attitude to farming characteristic of Vasilika's inhabitants is illustrated by what one of the farmers had to say about using a machine planter. "I've planted half of my forty *stremata* of cotton by hand and the other half by machine to see which will turn out better. It's an experiment, you see." The machine planter must have been better, because in 1961 the same farmer had planted all his cotton by machine.

A few rows of maize are planted in the midst of the cotton fields to provide feed for chickens. Boys and young men like to roast and eat a few ears of corn out in the fields in late August, but corn is not considered proper food for human beings, and eating corn bread is believed to be a sign of dire poverty.

Once the cotton starts to grow, in late May and June, the hoeing begins. This is arduous labor which includes weeding, chopping up the weeds, and arranging the chopped weeds around the cotton plants as a mulch. Hoeing is done by the girls and women of the household, although men sometimes help. If a farmer has as many as twenty *stremata* planted to cotton, it is at this point that he may begin to use hired labor. Generally, the women of the village who are not busy in their own cotton fields are called upon first. These are the wives and daughters of the shepherds and the wives and daughters of the few farmers who have small enough land holdings so that their women have time left over after hoeing their own fields. When these supplies of excess labor are exhausted, farmers turn to relatives and non-kin in the neighboring villages.

The hired women who came from other settlements used to live in the house of the farmer who employed them, and used to be fed by him as well. In 1961, however, the farmers were reporting a system they much preferred—the use of tractors and trucks to bring women from the neighboring villages in the early morning and to take them home again in the evening. This obviated the necessity of housing and feeding four or five girls at a time during several different periods in the course of the cotton growing season (cotton is weeded and hand cultivated at least twice and sometimes three or four times during the season). The women of Vasilika's households were especially pleased at the change, because although they enjoyed having the company of the hired women, who danced and sang in the evenings, they very much disliked the additional work involved in housing them. After a long day in the fields, the farmers' wives and daughters had to prepare a hot evening meal for the work crew and, before dawn each morning they had to pack the bread, cheese, and olives which would provide a morning collation and a midday meal in the fields. The de-

night. In October, the dried tobacco is pressed into bales by machines the farmers have for the purpose, and is then ready for sale.

A farmer can get 720 *okadhes* of tobacco from 6 *stremata* of land, and if he succeeds in selling the entire crop at 30 drachmas an *oka,* he receives the equivalent of $720. This is a very good income, indeed, especially when it is added to that derived from cotton.

Vasilika farmers are obviously in need of some capitalization to finance what have become considerable investments necessary for producing their wheat, cotton, and tobacco. Whether or not the farmers' savings would be adequate to finance their crops, the fact is that Vasilika farmers do not want to use their accumulated savings to invest in their own farms. Cash drachma savings are exchanged for gold English sovereigns or French or Italian specie, which accumulations are then set aside for the dowries of the girls of the family or to pay for the education of a son. The only notable exception to this use of savings is that the farmer who becomes wealthy enough to feel that his obligations to his children are taken care of may buy land if the opportunity presents itself. At the same time that the farmer does not want to spend savings on the current production of his crops, he is eager for an increased cash income to secure the future of his children. Increased cash income is possible only through investment in his farm. How does he get out of the dilemma? He willingly accepts credit from the Agricultural Bank of Greece. In addition, farmers accept from the bank the needed seed, artificial fertilizers, and chemical weed killers and insect sprays. March is the month in which the loans are made by the bank, so that the farmers always receive their money before Easter. Both the manager of the Agricultural Bank in Levadhia and we were aware of the fact that some of the money was used for Easter finery and Easter feasting. We had the impression that the farmers considered the loan as cash income to be spent as they wished. The repayments of principle and interest due in October were viewed by the farmers as something like an additional expense or tax chargeable against current income from the produce, and in this sense, not as expenditure of savings.

Miscellaneous Crops

Each household maintains a small kitchen garden near the cotton fields. This location permits the farmers to irrigate and to tend to the garden at the same time they work with the cotton. Both men and women work in the gardens to raise tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, squash, and melons of various kinds, but only to the extent necessary for immediate consumption by the household and its hired farm labor through the growing season. No effort is made to produce surplus for canning or for any other kind of home processing. Besides the summer vegetable gardens, in the early spring, the women of a few households fence off a rectangular area near the houses and plant spring onions, lettuce, spinach, and a type of lima bean called *kukya.* The wire or reed fenc-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Paleo Corinthos

[Villages of the Plains]

lished by 1952. Through their instrumentality a series of important changes have come to the agriculture of the village. Fertilizer, bought through the cooperatives, has played its usual role in increasing wheat yields. In addition, a new variety of wheat has been introduced by the agricultural extension agent; this has still further increased the harvest, so that in 1956 the farmers counted on between 200 and 300 okes of wheat per stremma, compared with their prewar expectation of 80 to 100. The co-ops also have been able to buy two tractors and two harvesting machines that cultivate all the crop land of the community. These machines are hired out to neighboring villages when not needed in Old Corinth, and bring in a fair sum of money.

The most significant step, however, has been the drilling of irrigation wells. Irrigation began on a modest scale before the war, but in 1947 fuel for the pumping engines was hard to come by and many of the thirty wells the village then possessed were not used fully. By 1956 the number of wells and pumps had increased to 163, and all were in full use. Most of the suitable land in the village has come under irrigation. On this land, the villagers raise garden vegetables, especially tomatoes, and despatch them daily to the Athens market by truck. The result, in terms of money income, is spectacular. I was assured that a farm now yields ten times the income it supplied before the war.

Old Corinth has also benefited from the revival of tourism. In 1955, some 72,000 tourists visited the archaeological museum and the ruins on the outskirts of the village; and most of these visitors left at least some small change behind them in one of the coffee houses or in the new tourist restaurant which the government constructed in 1955. Moreover, Old Corinth lies near the new electric power line. Electricity came to the village for the first time in 1956. Of all the changes benefiting them in

/48 cont./ Farm Implements. The average farmer has the following implements. 241 422 407 [412] [435]

1	Harrow	$3
1	Plow, iron	1.50
1	Wooden plow	1.00
1	Yoke	1.00
3	Hoes	0.35
2	Shovels	0.25
2	Sickles	0.35

The above are the implements which the farmer uses in his farming. Borrowing of tools and implements is extensively practiced by the farmers. [474] Some of the implements and machinery that are too expensive to be owned by one farmer are owned cooperatively such as seed cleaning machine, harrow and harvesting machines. This cooperative movement is very successful and solves some of their pressing economic problems. [326] [445] Some of the implements are made locally and all repairs are done by the local blacksmith.

/49/ Domestic Animals. The livestock problem is one which is still in its infancy. 233 All the sheep are owned by the Thracians and they are increasing them every year. The sheep is the competitor of the cow. A farmer can live without sheep but cannot do without cows, since the only source of power is the cow. [492] [578] The feeling between the sheep owners and the rest of the farmers is not very good, and may develop into a very critical conflict if steps are not taken ahead of time to prevent it. Since pasturing the fields and community pasture is free to any one, the sheep take [423] advantage of this law and get the greatest benefit in competition with the cows.

The local cows are a mixture of the scrubby Macedonian breed and so far no attempt was made to improve the livestock.

One solution discussed for solving some of the pressing problems of livestock is by taxation as follows:

1. No tax should be paid by the sheep up to 12 head.
2. 12 to 25 heads 15 cents per head.
3. 25 to 40 " 30 " " "
4. 40 to 80 " 75 " " "

/55 cont./

The low water table of only 18 to 24 feet, the flat land that will make irrigation easy, the nearness to the railroad station and to a big city, are the outstanding privileges of the farmer of Megali Vrisi to shift his farming methods and produce enough to improve his family living conditions. Nothing could meet his economic needs better than the combination of dairying with small cereals. 241

/56/ Cooperative Activities. A village system and the type of farming such as in Megali Vrisi makes cooperative movement essential. The limited capital of the individual farmer makes it hard to conduct his farming operations successfully. The type of living together has brought them the spirit of cooperation. Before any kind of organized cooperative movement started, there was already very close cooperation among the villagers in hiring a common shepherd, sharing alike in the erection and care of the school and church, repairing the roads, helping each other at harvest and in numerous other ways. The cooperative spirit was taught to them in the family from the type of family life they were living. Nothing explains so well their success in being able to establish themselves in the village, in such a short time as work-through the cooperative to help each other. 621 476 [241] [474] [866]

Since the settlement of the village the people organized a cooperative with a capital of $15,000. A threshing machine and a tractor of 64 horsepower was bought. All the farmers thresh their cereals and pay 11% of the crop. With the accumulated capital a flour mill with four grinding stones was built. The flour mill, besides serving the village, draws customers from the neighboring villages. The flour mill charges 3% /57/ of the grain. The cooperative organized a grocery which serves the members. It also bought 3 improved pure-bred bulls for the village herd. The cooperative has its own 15 acres of land where it conducts experiments for the farmers of the village with fertilizers, seeds and grass plants. All loans from the Agricultural Bank are made through the cooperative. All the Caucasians are members, but only 65% of the Thracians are members. The cooperative is one 241 474 [407] [256] [444] [232] [621]

/57 cont./
of the outstanding institutions in the village which guides the people in keeping accounts and in taking active part in appointing officers every year. 241 474 [621]

The yearly meeting of the cooperative lasts 2 days and all the men who served in the army take active part. After the committee presents its accounts and accomplishments and its future program, a discussion starts from different members either praising or criticising the work of the existing committee. Different proposals for improvement are made and finally it ends with a vote for a new committee of six. During these two days of discussion people learn from each other how to judge and evaluate certain deeds of the cooperative.

The government, understanding the importance of the cooperative has organized the Ministry of Cooperatives /58/ under the auspices of the Agricultural Bank. The effect of the cooperative on the people is great not only on the economic life but also on their social life as well. It draws the people close together and they think not in terms of their immediate needs but of their future welfare. [647]

Every year the cooperative sends two students to the high school, gives prizes to the farmers that raise good seed and better animals, gives financial aid to the poor, and helps the unfortunate sick to go to hospitals. These are signs of the role the cooperative can play in the near future. [741]

Besides unifying the whole village into an economic unit it also is becoming a center of spreading higher ideals among the people. Its powers at the present are restricted due to the lack of experienced men with foresight. There are possibilities for one to do more in devising community programs by working with the cooperative. [621]

Farm Techniques. The biblical type of farming is still the kind that yields the greater returns with the least cost. The animal power is composed of oxen with a yoke and an iron plow. The wooden plow still has its /59/ blessings for certain soils. In soils, 241 [492] [407]

/59 cont./ 241
that are shallow, that is where the top soil is 5 to 7 inches, the iron plow cannot work so successfully as the wooden plow. It goes too deep and brings up the raw infertile soil which destroys the field for many years. The wooden plow does not turn the furrow over but leaves it in the place, thus the field is plowed without bringing to the surface the subsoil. The farmers think the iron plow poisons the soils of this kind and never use an iron plow on such soils but only a wooden one. The fields for wheat seed are plowed from 3 to 7 times before seeding. It has been a custom to plow the same field as many times as possible. The common expression is: "The more you work the soil the more you get." This is of course a general principle and does not hold true under all conditions. [407] 241 242

Manure is seldom applied since almost all of it is used as fuel. Each farmer on the average has 4 animals and they are in pasture all day the year around. What little manure he gets he uses for fuel. 241 237 372

Chemical fertilizers are too expensive and the farmer is not acquainted with them. He still talks about them as "fine soil filled in sack and colored with lime."

They understand well the importance of manure but /60/ cannot afford to use it for their fields. One of the outstanding problems which is that of a fuel to substitute for dried manure should be attacked first before trying to do anything with farming. The productivity of the land is decreasing year after year. The humus, what little there is, is depleted and the fields need it in order to continue cultivating them. In one survey, I found out that 92% of the manure is used as fuel and only 8% is applied to the fields. This study also revealed that by applying the manure to the field the increased production buys 2 1/2 times as much fuel of lignite coal. After proving to them the importance of the manure they were convinced of the profit in buying lignite coal, but a special stove so constructed as to fulfil the needs of a farm family was not discovered. [433] [433] [354]